

## Three Tips for a Happy Holiday E-mail Program

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The holidays are quickly approaching and many ISPs are ramping up their anti-spam programs to ensure inboxes are filled with sugarplums and not lumps of coal. That means it's also a good time for e-mail marketers to make sure they're doing all they can to safeguard their good reputation. Here are three simple but effective steps e-mail marketers should take before sending out holiday campaigns.

### **The first step is to address list hygiene issues.**

Make sure your list contains only clean, deliverable e-mail addresses. High bounce rates stand out to ISPs and can affect your reputation, causing future deliverability issues.

### **Second, be relevant.**

People who have not opened, clicked, or responded in 12 or more months are probably no longer engaged with your brand. They should be treated very differently from active customers. This is the ideal time to try a re-activation campaign. Make them a special offer to get them back on board and they'll be more likely to stay engaged through the crucial holiday sales period. Exclude the non-responders from your holiday mailings. The deadbeats are where the undeliverables, complainers, and spam traps are hiding. Yes, you may lose a percentage of your list, but you can be confident that those who remain are actually of value to your company.

### **And third, if you aren't already, consider using authentication services such as SPF, SenderID, and DomainKeys.**

AOL, Microsoft, Yahoo, Gmail and others are putting far more emphasis on this today than they have in the past. For the first time, SPF checks are appearing in content filter tests, meaning legitimate e-mail marketers with out-of-date records may see their deliverability impacted. These authentication programs are not foolproof, but will go a long way in keeping you out of trouble and in the inbox.